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ABSTRACT

To motivate teachers toward quality performance, administrators must follow effective organizational practices and methods for professional development. This report describes how Hampshire County, West Virginia, schools implement ideas that increase productivity. Among ideas used were those of James Lewis, Jr., whose book, Excellent Organizations, identifies assumptions held by managers of successful organizations that apply to constructing a supportive system for teachers. (1) Success depends on how people are treated. (2) Managers must be caring, trusting, and supportive of the organization. (3) Teamwork is the key to results. (4) Employees' performance improves as managerial control lessens. County administrators analyzed teachers as belonging to a social structure and assessed human relations functioning through the Performance Pathfinder System. The nine areas rated were as follows: human resources, goal clarity, recognition, communications, accountability, climate, involvement, planning, and measurement. Weaknesses in these areas often involve inadequate feedback and insufficient personnel contact with supervisors. To develop feedback and support for teachers, schools administered the Personal Profile System, a self-assessment instrument that identifies preferred interaction styles and motivating environments. A school's problem with supervision was corrected through findings analysis. Team activity has increased teachers' responsibilities and achievements. As their greatest asset, schools should develop teachers' potential through problem-solving involvement, professional growth opportunities, and a more secure emotional environment. (CJH)

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"HOW TO REJUVENATE HOHUM TEACHERS"

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EA 019 278

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There is a national focus on school improvement which gives us the opportunity to examine our practices and look for ways to create more effective organizations. We are hearing public clamor for change and we must respond. We know that competence in the basic skills is vital. But there is more. As eloquently stated in the philosophy of Boston's Brookline High school, "Schools are instituted and maintained to serve their communities as havens of learning, not just as microcosms of the marketplace. Here students are apprenticed to life in its ideal form, life that is devoted to inquiry, touched by beauty, guided by reason, girded by simplicity, graced by excellence. At the very least, graduates should exhibit competency in the exercise of certain skills. But the aim is to make them literate about the full array of human achievement, so they will know what it means to do anything well." Clearly this love of learning, quest for knowledge and pride in accomplishment can only happen if caring teachers model these values for students.

I believe we need a Renaissance of Caring in our schools. By caring I'm talking about how we relate to one another when sharing time, exchanging energy and knowledge. When we care, we attend, listen, respond and personalize: with these actions we build self esteem and encourage productivity in one another. We work together as a team to achieve personal and mutual goals.

A superintendent was known to assign much work to committees. When asked why, he replied he had learned a lesson from a farmer friend. The farmer plowed his field with one horse, but he called to the horse, "Giddyap Bess, giddyap Maude, giddyap Diamond." The superintendent asked the farmer whey he called his horse all those names. The farmer answered, "Her name is Bess, but she doesn't pull to her full strength. So I put blinders on her and call other names. Then she pulls harder because she thinks she has other horses helping her." Like the farmer, we need to find techniques that will encourage teachers to work to full capacity. However, we suspect that using blinders is not appropriate. In many business and school settings, team building is recognized as a means to this end. In order for team members to give their best they must be aware of their strengths and the confidence others have in them. We would like to think people can be trusted to acknowledge and use their strengths for the greater good. I am convinced that this attitude is key in the rejuvination of our teachers.

Research tells us that effective schools have in common six conditions and descriptors. First, a positive school climate exists. This is characterized by an orderly, businesslike environment conducive to learning and safety. Second, strong insturctional leadership by the principal is recognized. Characteristics of this leader include active

participation, classroom involvement and the assignment and delegation of instructional responsibilities. Third, high expectations are frequently inspected and reinforced. The fourth condition, academic focus describes the emphasis that learning is the primary goal of the school. Fifth, frequent monitoring refers to continuous evaluation of staff and organizational goals. Last these schools have positive school community relations. These indicators can be seen as a barometer not only of the success of students, but also of teachers. If we imagine ourselves, working in these excellent schools, we can feel the sense of teamwork, the pride of accomplishment and the sincere sense of caring.

In contrast, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot reports in her book The Good High School that in most schools, "Teachers are typically cast in low positions in the school hierarchy and not treated with respectful regard. In the worst schools, teachers are demeaned.....by administrators who view them as custodians, guardians and uninspired technicians. In less grotesque settings teachers are left alone with little adult interaction and minimal attention to their needs for support, reward and criticism." Lightfoot concludes that only if teachers are treated as adults, will they in turn, treat students with dignity and respect.

Sensitivity to the human relations needs of people is essential to the effective school model. Let us talk about a systemwide approach for revitalization and motivation of our teachers. Fully implemented these strategies will address the productivity of all persons associated with the system: service personnel, supervisors, superintendents, board members, community members, parents and students. We recognize that all people need the opportunity for personal and professional growth. Most of us would like more challenge, autonomy, informality and less rigid authority in our place of work.

Let's turn the organizational chart upside down to see what happens in the delivery of educational services. Our customers are the students: our first line people are teachers. They deliver the service to the customer. Our second line people are the principals to whom the teachers are accountable. All of the rest of us exist to support the teacher. This exercise, suggested by Peters and Austin in their book, A Passion for Excellence, implies that chain-of-command charts are disposable, if people interact and responsibilities are assigned. James Lewis, Jr., in his book Excellent Organizations, identifies the basic assumptions held by managers of successful operations. First of all success is predicated on people, the manner in which they are treated, and the way they respond to that treatment. Second, today's manager to be successful, must be caring, trusting and supportive of the organization. Third, the key

to results is teamwork. Fourth, employees will improve their performance is managers lessen control over them. Fifth, when an employee's performance is below par, one or more managers are often at fault. Such management tenets assume that high quality and productivity can be realized only when organizations are concerned with and attentive to the whole person in terms of physiological and psychological needs. These are theory Z management beliefs widely used in business and industry and associated with high productivity of personnel.

In Hampshire County we are trying to implement these ideas. Let me say, I am not here this morning to tell you that we have disposed of our organizational chart. We have made some progress. Our efforts began in working with teachers through in-service education and faculty meetings. We used Adventures in Attitudes, a wonderful group dynamics program of self-discovery and positive attitudes. We presented The Psychology of Winning, Dennis Waitley's positive self-actualization and motivational material. We taught Assertive Discipline emphasizing Lee Canter's statement that teachers are people who have the right to get their needs met in the classroom and school. The superintendent hired motivational speakers for school opening, designed a recruiting brochure proclaiming that Teachers are Number 1, and initiated an annual Teacher Appreciation luncheon at which he expressed gratitude for a job well done. These efforts were warmly received, but gave teachers only a temporary lift. In a short period of time, the drift toward hohumness resurfaced. What is it with teachers, we wondered? Just what is the problem? So we set out to find some answers so we would have direction. What we found was that to focus on teachers in isolation is not enough. This is a "blinders" approach. Teachers exist in a social structure in a school. We decided to take a look at this structure in Hampshire County.

Using the Performance Pathfinder System, an instrument which assesses human relations functioning in nine processes, we completed a needs assessment. The Pathfinder gave us ratings in the following areas:

1. Human Resources refers to the capability of management to direct, coordinate, motivate and evaluate individuals and groups.

2. Goal Clarity refers to the ability to communicate and measure, when achieved.

3. Recognition has to do with the staff's feelings of belonging, of making contributions, of improving and achieving. This is a critical need for the human psyche.

4. Communications are the lifeblood of an organization and critical to productivity.

5. Accountability has to do with the extent to which people know what is expected of them. It refers to the identification, acceptance and communication of tasks and roles associated with a job.

6. Climate is the state of an organization measured in terms of positive or negative influences, attitudes and relations.

7. Involvement has to do with existing or potential opportunities to use personal capabilities in creative, constructive activities.

8. Planning is essential for smooth operation. It refers to the time allocated to evaluate needs, set priorities, develop strategies and implement tactics to achieve goals.

9. Measurement has to do with the existence of reasonable, rational and practical standards by which an individual is evaluated in a fair manner. Our results enabled us to identify the needs of our school system as a whole, as well as those needs unique to individual schools. As a district our weaknesses were in Recognition, Communication and Planning.

Probable causes for weaknesses in recognition are lack of adequate feedback from supervisors about work, dissatis faction from feeling like "just another number", a feeling that management is concerned with "number one", a sense that supervisors are too busy to complement work, bitterness that no one notices until something is wrong and displeasure that one's opinion is seldom requested.

Probable causes for problems in communication include confusion from not knowing what is happening, resentment because supervisors do not take leadership roles, dissatisfaction because decisions are made arbitrarily and unclear policies and procedures.

The third weakness, planning, has as its causes insufficient personal contact with supervisors, lack of encouragement for personal and professional growth and little sense of team committment.

Our teachers have told us clearly that they want more feedback, guidance and support. They want to be involved in decision making and to be team players. The first step in building a team is understanding of self. To accomplish this we used the Personal Profile System, a self assessment

instrument which identifies for people their preferred interaction style in the workplace, and the type of environment which is the most motivating for them. Frederick Herzberg, writing for the Harvard Business Review, points out that the motivating aspects of work, achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and growth, are intrinsic to the work a person does. The factors extrinsic to the job, such a policies and administration, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, salary, status and security are those which correlate with productivity. These conditions can demotivate. Knowing that motivation is a Do It to Yourself Job, we can modify the environment so it is no longer a source of dissatisfaction for people.

As one of our problems was in supervision we are helping principals to improve their team develoment skills. A few weeks ago a work session was held to discuss the needs assessment findings. In looking at teacher's needs they were able to identify the roadblocks which keep them from assuming a leadership role. Principals expressed needs similar to those of teachers. Knowing that teachers wanted their help and feedback motivated them to become more responsive as managers.

To reach the same end the board and superintendent engaged a consultant in educational organization to evaluate our central office staffing, roles and functions. Mr. Jerald Edwards looked critically at our needs, personnel and job descriptions and generated helpful recommendations on how to tap personal strengths in reassigning work responsi-bilities.

At the school level there has been some team activity which has affected the responsibilities of teachers. Examples include a teacher of the month award, voted by faculty for a winning personal quality. Awards are displayed on the school bulletin board, in a town storefront and published in the paper. A morale committee was formed to address perceived school problems. Their efforts have achieved some flexibility in planning time. This group also coordinates a teacher reinforcement program. Each week a grade level assumes responsibility for recognizing other teachers. One week they presented carnations donated by local florists. Another school developed a parent volunteer program. Parents are sharing duties with teachers and by being part of the team, opportunities for mutual recognition and communication are enhanced. A junior high school holds a teacher awards day when students choose to reward teachers individually for some helping quality. A set of affirmations was developed by another faculty and prominantly displayed in the workroom. Examples are: "I care about boys and girls," "I enjoy challenge of every school day" and "I am proud to be a teacher". There is a visual complement to all examples: pictures, people coming and going at different times,

flowers, parents, graphic displays. There are symbolic reminders of what is important to this faculty. Each school is finding something that works for them. Involvement in the process of finding the answers is what is important.

We are proud of our school system with its experienced, stable work force and favorable achievement scores. It is easy to find things to say and do to praise our teachers. We feel that the steps we have taken have dealt with many of our human relations concerns and have affected productivity positively. Our solutions may or may not be applicable to your school. It is my personal conviction that these kinds of changes need to be implemented in education--I believe it is the HUMAN factor that makes the difference.

If you agree and want this vision to come about, there is something boards of education can do to vastly facilitate the change. In Hampshire County, we saved the last that which should have come first. The change from authoritarian management to participatory management cannot be achieved democratically. Unless there is a mandate, people will stay with the olds ways with the attitude "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" School boards must make their support clear through what they say and do. Most of us say what we what for our students, but truly effective organizations must also say what they want for and from their personnel. This can be well stated by a Board in the following philosophy: "We believe that personnel are our greatest asset: we can best develop their potential through:

1. Involving them in problem solving

2. Providing the opportunity for professional and personal growth

3. and Maintaining a secure physical and emotional environment.

In response, we believe our personnel should demonstrate loyalty, fairness, honesty, integrity and high quality productive use of time." This simple statement communicates expectations and direction for everyone, influences performance of employees positively and provides guidelines for decision making and behavior. It puts us all on the honor system, and provides us with the leadership we want and need.

Former President Eisenhower explained his theory of leadership by placing a piece of string on his desk. "Look", he would say, "if I push it, it doesn't go anywhere. But if I pull it, then I can take it anywhere I want." Let us, educational leaders of America, pull education toward a Renaissance of Caring, its rightful ideal, as we approach the twenty-first century.